

# **The Sutra On The Ten wholesome Ways Of Action**

(Taisho Tripitaka 600)

**Translated to Chinese by the Tripitakacarya Sikshananda from Khotan during the Tang Dynasty**

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Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha stayed in the palace of the Dragon King of the Ocean together with an assembly of eight thousand great Bhikshus and thirty- two thousand Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas altogether. At that time the World Honored One told the Dragon King saying:

Because all beings have different consciousness and thoughts, they perform too different actions and as a consequence there is the turning around in all the different courses of existence. Oh Dragon King, do you see the variety of shapes and appearances in this meeting and in the great ocean, are they not different from one another.

Thus among all of them there is none which is not made by the mind, whether it is brought about by whole- some or unwholesome bodily, verbal, and mental actions, and yet the mind is formless it cannot be grasped or perceived, but it is the unreal accumulation and arising of all dharmas which are ultimately without owner, without I and mine. Although that which is manifested by each (being) according to its actions is not the same, there is nevertheless really no creator in these (actions). Therefore all dharmas are inconceivable and inexpressible, their own nature is phantom like. The wise ones knowing this ought to cultivate wholesome actions. Through this the aggregates sense-bases and elements that will be given rise to, will all be upright and those who will see them will not grow tired of them.

Oh Dragon King, when you behold the body of the Buddha born from a hundred thousand of Kotis of merit, with all the marks adorned, the splendor of its radiance covering the whole of the great assembly, even if there were immeasurable Kotis of Ishvara and Brahma devas they all would not come again into appearance. Those who look with reverence at the Tathagata's body how can they but not be dazzled. You again behold all these great Bodhisattvas of marvelous appearance, dignified and pure. All this comes into being entirely through the merit of cultivating wholesome actions. Again all the powerful ones like the eight classes of devas and dragons, and suchlike they also come into being because of the merits of wholesome actions.

Now all beings in the great ocean are of course and mean shapes and appearances, they all whether small or large performed unwholesome bodily, verbal, and mental actions out

of all kinds of thoughts from their own minds. Thus is that each being receives its own result according to its action.

You ought to practice and to study constantly in this way, and also to bring beings to a thorough understanding of cause and effect and to the practice of wholesome actions. In this you must have unshakable right view and you must not fall again into the views of annihilation and eternity. As to the fields of merit you rejoice in them, respect them and support them because of this you will also be respected and supported by men and devas.

Oh Dragon King you must know that Bodhisattva has one method which enables him to cut off all sufferings of evil destinies. What kind of methods is this? It is constantly, day and night, to recollect, to reflect on and to contemplate on the wholesome dharma so as to cause the wholesome dharma to increase from thought-moment to thought-moment, without allowing the least unwholesome thought to mingle in. This will then enable you to cut off all evil forever, to bring the wholesome dharma to completion and to be constantly near all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other holy communities. Speaking about wholesome dharma, the bodies of men and devas, the Illumination of the Shravakas, the Illumination of the Pratyekas, and the Highest Illumination, they are all accomplished depending on these dharma which are to be considered as fundamental. Therefore they are called wholesome dharma. These dharma are the ten wholesome ways of actions. What are these ten? They are the ability to give up forever killing, stealing, wrong conduct, lying, slandering, harsh language, frivolous speech, lust, hate, and wrong views.

Oh Dragon King, if one gives up taking life then one will accomplish ten ways of being free from vexations. What are the ten?

- i. One give universally to all beings without fear
- ii. One always has a heart of great compassion towards all beings
- iii. All habitual tendencies of hate in oneself will be cut off forever
- iv. One's body is always free from illness
- v. One's life is long
- vi. One is constantly protected by non-human beings
- vii. One is always without bad dreams, one sleeps and wakes happily
- viii. The entanglement of enmity is eradicated and one is free from all hatred
- ix. One is free from the dread of evil destinies
- x. When one's life comes to an end one will be born as a deva

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn-towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha attain to the ability peculiar to the Buddha, to live as long as one wishes.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up stealing then one will attain to ten kinds of dharma which can protect one's confidence. what are the ten?

- i. One's wealth will increase and accumulate and cannot be scattered or destroyed by

Kings, robbers, floods, fires, and careless sons.

- ii. One is thought of with fondness by many people.
- iii. People do not take advantage of one.
- iv. Everywhere one is praised
- v. One is above the worry, that one oneself could be injured.
- vi. One's good name spreads
- vii. One is without fear in public.
- viii. One is endowed with wealth, long life, strength, peace, happiness, and skill in speech, without deficiencies
- ix. One always thinks of giving
- x. At the end of one's life, one will be born as a deva

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain to the realization of the purified great illumination wisdom.

Again the Dragon King, if one gives up wrong conduct one will attain to four kinds of dharmas which are praised by the wise. What are the four?

- i. All one's faculties are tuned and adjusted.
- ii. One is free from turmoil and excitement.
- iii. One is praised and extolled by the world
- iv. One's wife cannot be encroached upon by anybody

These are the four. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain the mastersign of the Buddha, of a concealed organ.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up lying then one will attain to the eight dharmas which are praised by the devas. What are the eight?

- i. One's mouth is always pure and has the fragrance of a blue lotus flower.
- ii. One is trusted and obeyed by all the world.
- iii. What one says is true and one is loved by men and devas.
- iv. One always comforts beings with loving words.
- v. One attains to excellent bliss of mind and one's actions, speech, and thoughts are pure.
- vi. One's speech is faultless and one's mind is always joyful.
- vii. One's words are respected and are followed by men and devas.
- viii. One's wisdom is extraordinary and cannot be subdued

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain to the true speech of the Tathagata.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up slandering one will then attain to five kinds of incorruptible dharmas. What are the five?

- i. One attains to an incorruptible body because no harm can be done to one.
- ii. One gets an incorruptible family because no one can destroy it.
- iii. One attains to incorruptible confidence because this is in line with one's own actions.
- iv. One attains to an incorruptible spiritual life because what one cultivates is firmly grounded.
- vi. One gets incorruptible spiritual friends because one does not mislead or delude anybody.

These are the five. If one is one who is able to turn-towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, gets a holy retinue which cannot be corrupted by any Mara or heretic.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up harsh language then one will attain to the accomplishment of eight kinds of pure actions. What are the eight?

- i. One's speech is meaningful and reasonable
- ii. All that one says is profitable.
- iii. One's words are bound to be truthful.
- iv. One's language is beautiful and marvelous.
- v. One's words are accepted (by others).
- vi. One's words are trusted.
- vii. One's words cannot be ridiculed.
- viii. All one's words are being loved and enjoyed (by others)

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, be endowed with the perfect characteristic of the Brahma voice of the Tathagata.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up frivolous speech then one will attain to the accomplishment of the three certainties. What are the three?

- i. One is certain to be loved by the wise
- ii. One is certain to be able to answer questions with wisdom and according to reality
- iii. One is certain to have the most excellent dignity and virtue among men and devas and one is without falsehood.

These are the three. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, attain to the Tathagata's (ability) to predict everything, none (of the predictions) are ever in vain.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up lust, then one will attain to the accomplishment of the five kinds of freedom. What are the five?

- i. Freedom of bodily, verbal, and mental actions because one's six faculties are perfect
- ii. Freedom as regards property because all enemies and robbers cannot rob one.

- iii. Freedom with regard to merit because whatever one wishes one will be provided with.
- iv. Freedom of being in the position of a King, because precious, rare and marvelous things will be reverently offered to one.
- v. The things one will get will surpass in excellency by a hundred times that what one is looking for, because in times by-gone one was neither stingy nor envious

These are the five. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time becomes Buddha, be especially revered in all three realms all (the beings of the three realms) will all respectfully make offering to one.

Again, oh Dragon King, if one gives up hatred then one will attain to eight kinds of dharmas of joy of mind. What the eight?

- i. One's mind is free from (the want) to injure and to annoy (others)
- ii. One's mind is free from hatred
- iii. One's mind is free from (the desire) to dispute and to argue
- iv. One's mind is gentle and upright
- v. One has attained to the mind of loving kindness of a saint
- vi. One is of a mind that always acts beneficially giving peace to beings
- vii. One's bodily appearance is dignified and one is respectfully by all
- viii. Because one is kind and forbearing, one will be born soon in the Brahma World.

These are the eight. If one is one who is able to turn towards to the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the times one becomes Buddha, attain to the mind of the Buddha that is free from obstacles. People will not become tired of looking at him.

Again, Oh Dragon King, if one gives up wrong views, one will attain to the accomplishment of ten meritorious dharmas. What are the ten?

- i. One attains to genuinely good bliss of mind and one gets genuinely good companions
- ii. One has deep confidence in (the law of) cause and effect and one would rather lose one's life than do evil.
- iii. One takes refuge in the Buddha only and not in devas or others.
- iv. One is of a straight mind and right views, and leaves behind the net of doubts about good and evil fortune.
- v. One will not be born again in an evil course of existence but will always be born as a man or deva
- vi. Immeasurable blessings and wisdom will increase sublimely from turn to turn
- vii. One will forever leave the wrong path and tread the holy path.
- viii. The view of a personality will not arise (in one) and one gives up all evil actions.
- ix. One will abide in unobstructed understanding.
- x. One will not fall into any difficult conditions.

These are the ten. If one is one who is able to turn towards the Highest Perfect Illumination, one will later at the time one becomes Buddha, realize quickly all Buddha-dharmas and accomplish the mastery of the higher spiritual powers."

At that time the World Honored One further told the Dragon King saying:

"If there is a Bodhisattva who is able to give up killing and harming, and practice giving, follow these wholesome actions at the time he treads the path, he will therefore always be rich in wealth, without anybody being able to rob him. he will have a long life and not die untimely, and he will not be injured by any robbers or enemies.

Because he gives up taking what is not given and practice giving, he will always be rich in wealth without there being anybody who can rob him. He will be most excelling beyond comparison (in this respect), and will be able to collect completely all the store of Buddha-dharmas.

Because he gives up the impure way of living and practices giving, he will always be rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. His family will be virtuous and obedient. There will be nobody who can look at his mother, wife, and daughter with a lustful mind.

Because he gives up false speech and practices giving, he will always be rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. Giving up all slandering he takes up the true Dharma. That which he does according to his vows will certainly bear fruit.

Because he gives up speech that causes dissension and practices giving, he will always be rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. His family will be harmonious and they (all the members of the family) have the same aspirations and joys in common and will never unreasonably dispute (with one another).

Because he gives up coarse evil speech and practices giving, he will always be rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. At all gatherings people joyfully accept him as their teacher. His words will be received with trust without opposition.

Because he gives up meaningless speech and practices giving, he will always be rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. His words are not spoken in vain, but are received with respect by all people. He is able and skilled in solving doubts and uncertainties.

Because he gives up the greedy mind and practices giving, he is always rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. All he has he gives (to others) with kindness. His confidence is firm and his understanding well grounded. He is endowed with great authority and strength.

Because he gives up the angry mind and practices giving he is always rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. He quickly accomplishes by himself the wisdom of the mind that is free from obstruction. All his faculties are well dignified and all those who see him respect and love him.

Because he gives up the perverted mind and practices giving, he is always rich in wealth without anybody being able to rob him. He is always born in family which is possessed of right views, reverence and confidence. He sees the Buddha, hears the dharma and supports the Community of Monks. He never forgets or loses the great Illumination Mind.

These are the great benefits obtained by a Great Being (Mahasattva), who at the time he cultivates the Bodhisattva path, practices the ten wholesome actions and adorns them without giving.

Thus, oh Dragon King, I am summarising. Because one adorns the practice of the ten wholesome ways of action with morality, the meaning and benefit of all the Buddha-dharma can arise and the great vows are brought to completion.

Because one adorns (the practice of the ten wholesome ways of actions) with patience, one attains to the perfect voice of the Buddha and all the marks will be lovely.

Because one adorns (this practice) with effort, one is able to destroy the Mara enemy and enter into the store of Buddha-dharmas.

Because one adorns (this practice) with meditation, therefore mindfulness, wisdom, shame, conscientiousness and calm will arise.

Because one adorns (this practice) with wisdom one is able to cut off wrong views arising from discrimination.

Because one adorns (this practice) with loving kindness no (thought of) anger or harming will arise in oneself towards any being.

Because one adorns (this practice) with compassion, one will have sympathy towards all beings and will never get weary of and indifferent to them.

Because one adorns (this practice) with sympathetic joy, one's mind when seeing somebody cultivating the good will be free from envy and jealousy.

Because one adorns (this practice) with serenity, one will not have a mind that is neither attached to favorable circumstances or that resents adverse circumstances.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the four ways of helping (others), one will always be diligent in helping and teaching all beings.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the foundations of mindfulness, one will be able to be skillful in the practice of the contemplation of the four foundations of mindfulness.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the (four) right efforts, one will be able to cut off and remove entirely all unwholesome dharmas.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the (four) roads to power, one's body and mind will always be calm and at ease.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the five faculties, deep confidence will be firmly established, there will be unremitting effort, one is always free from confusion and from delusion, one is at peace and well balanced, and all the defilement will be cut off.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the (five) powers, all enmity will be entirely destroyed and one cannot be harmed.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the (seven) factors of illumination, one will always well awake to all dharmas.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the Noble (eightfold) Path, one will attain to perfect wisdom which will always be present before oneself.

Because one adorns (this practice) with calm meditation, one is able to wash away all the bonds and (latent) tendencies.

Because one adorns (this practice) with insight meditation, one is able to know the self nature of all dharmas according to reality.

Because one adorns (this practice) with the means, one will quickly attain to the fulfillment of the conditioned and unconditioned happiness.

Oh Dragon King, you should know that these ten wholesome actions can lead up to the completion of the Ten Powers (of the Tathagata), of the (Four Kinds of) Fearlessness, of the Eighteen Dharmas that distinguish (the Buddha) and of all Buddha-dharmas. You should therefore practice and and train with diligence.

Oh Dragon King, it is like the towns and villages, they all depend on the great ground where they stand. All the herbs, grasses, flowers, trees, and woods also depend on the ground for their growth. With these ten wholesome ways of actions it is the same. All men and devas are established (in their human and deva nature) depending on them. The illumination of all the Shravakas, of all the Pratyekas, the way of the Bodhisattva, all Buddha-dharmas they all are attained and come to fruition due to these ten wholesome great grounds. After the Buddha had spoken this discourse, the Dragon King of the Ocean, together with the great assembly, all the devas, asuras, and so on, all rejoiced greatly, received it with confidence and put it reverently into practice.